



THE CONCEPT OF CLEANLINESS IN THE LIGHT OF YOGA : A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The concept of cleanliness is very importance for modern human life. Cleanliness indicates the purity of the inner self as well as the external physical fitness of an individual. It also means the clean and tidiness of surrounding environment where the people live in. Literally, it manifests both the development of the individual and the ideal society. The ideal nationality can be conceived when the individuals are proper conscious about their sound mind, physical body and the cleanliness of surrounding environment.

In this context, the Yoga philosophical thought and practices are might be most relevant. Because, the Yoga has tried to explore this concept of cleanliness with practice, so that an individual could be enabled to all round development of his life in the society such as – physical, mental, and spiritual development. The objective of the present study is to explore Yoga practice of cleanliness among the mass people in a comprehensive way. To analyze this concept of cleanliness critically with the other philosophical and the religious thoughts for the better understanding of the subject is another objective of this study.

KEYWORDS: Cleanliness, importance, spirituality, yoga, practice, religion, environment.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of cleanliness meanse the state of being clean or tidiness. It is the practice of keeping oneself as clean and also keeping clean his surrounding environment. It might be the state or habit of being kept which may be an object or place. Again it might be meant as a quality or the state of being morality or spiritually pure or upright. Therefore, the cleanliness indicates both the mental purity as well as the physical tidiness of the body, object, place or the surrounding environment of an individual or an ideal society. Hence, the cleanliness meanse the devoid of dirtiness, the aim of which is sound health, beauty and proper freshness of the mind.

Again the term 'swachata' is used as synonym of the english word cleanliness. The term 'swachata' has been derived from Sanskrit terms viz. – 'Swacha' - meaning 'very clean' and 'ta' - meaning 'careful observance'. Therefore, both the words indicated to practice cleanliness with an attentive manner for the benifit of oneself as well as others or the surrounding environment. Therefore, the concept of cleanliness and its practice is the most importance issue of day to day life of human being.

Swachata Programme in India :

As it may be mentioned that, the concept of cleanliness is an instrument, it is the core condition which has a huge impact upon the mind of an individual. It indicates the proper development, the ideal status of a society. Because, the upliftment of a society or state depends upon the proper all round development of the individual who lived there. The mental upliftments as well as the physical developments of an individual are purely depended on the clean and hygeine environment. Regarding the development of a state the positive impact of cleanliness is very important one. Because, for the proper development of society the contribution of cleanliness indicated ideality or standerity of a state.

At present in the Indian context, we have some scheme such as 'Swauch Bharat Mission' which indicates the identification of the India in a clean environment . For this identity of india, we should have to be analysed the other relevant schemes. As it is known all of us that human beings are rational animal but, there sense of rational quality has been degraded which can be fleshed through their irrational activities like – the garbags throughing, spiting here and there, peeping, smoking cigarette and emitted smoke in the open air etc. These kind of huge negative activities impact adversely upon the environment. To reduce these kinds of malactivities performed by the people, the popularity of these schemes prepared by the Government of India periodically, have been increased and the awareness of cleanliness has been become populer among the mass people. This is the good indication for the new generation.

Regarding the cleanliness programe, the Government of India had launched so many schemes like – 'The central rural anmaya scheme' in 1999, the 'Sampurna anamaya prachara' in 2003, the 'Clean village award' (Nirmal gram puruskara) in 2012, the 'Nirmal Bharat Abhijan' in 2012, and the 'Swach Bharat Mission' in 2014, 2 Oct. etc. Throuhg these programmes the Government of India has been tried to develop in to one step ahead regarding the cleanliness.

Religions and Cleanliness :

The major religions of the world have been given great impotence upon the con-

cept of cleanliness. Because, the cleanliness and the purity of the individual self is interdependent. Therefore, some of the major religious viwes have been discussed here for better understanding of the subject and its importance.

Hinduism:

In the Hinduism, it has been found that the synonym term of the cleanliness is used in the Sanskrit term as 'Saucam', which means the purity of the physical body and the mind for 'Spirituality' In the Bhagavat Gita it has been showed this concept of purity in the sloka no. 13.8, 16.3, 16.7, 17.14 and 18.42 . According to the Bhagavat Gita, one must be practiced the cleanliness because, it is the quality of the Devine, it is the most important virtue for the human being, and it might be regarded as the cause of happiness. It is the way of to become Godliness and the ideal beauty of health. Hence, for the Gita, cleanliness should be most important for the spiritual practices like – the life of mundane happiness, the purity of the self and its relation to the Supreme Self, the purity of the householder's life, the purity of the Brahmin's life etc. Therefore, for the Gita, cleanliness indicates the detachment from the action with desire (B.G.- 12.2.1).

Therefore, the cleanliness is the important part of human life style for Hinduism. Because, it is the way to intimated individual self with the Supreme reality, it is the Godliness quality. The Veidic seers also have been treated the cleanliness as the most important and practicable virtue. Therefore, cleanliness meanse the detachment of the material desire which is the prime way of individual self to attain in to the leberation.

Cleanliness and Christianity :

There has been seen in the Christian religious thought whether the catholic or protestant which has given great importance on the concept of cleanliness and its practice. Because, the Chrstians have performed so many rituals which related to the cleanliness, as indicated in the 'Bible' with relation to the human's individual life as well his social life like – the cleanliness at the time of chieldbirth and menustration, cleanliness at the time of sexuality, cleanliness at the time of skin or other diseases, cleanliness at the time of animal sacrifices, cleanliness of food and giving the importance on hygene, cleanliness of lavatories and bathings, cleanliness of clothings, cleanliness of after and before taking meals and cleanliness of the before prayer etc. Hence, the christianity has been given much emphasis upon the cleanliness of mandane life as well spiritual life.

Cleanliness and Islamic Ideology:

In the Islamic philosophical thought, it has been found that cleanliness is treated as the part and partcell of the spiritual life. Because, the muslims have been given great stress upon cleanliness of pysical body, clothings, food and hygene. In this regard the holy Quran has mentioned that – "Its sure the Allah has loved the persons who have promised or contrited not to do wrong and the persons who performed purity with proper way" (Sura- Bakara, verse no. – 222). As there has been many variety of principles and directives among the states for the cleanliness management among the people. In this regard the religious directives on the cleanliness of the Islamic ideology also have been treated as a very important one. In this regard, another great Islamic Hadid is relevant to the context of the subject. In this Hadid, the prophet Mohmmad (Sa:) has said that – "Its sure that the Allah is pure, He likes the purity; He is clean, so He likes cleanliness therefore, you keep clean yourself as well your surrounding environment" (Tirmij). In

the Islamic way of life, they performed the practice of cleanliness through ablution (wudu) at the eve of every prayer times, and recommended to stay ablution in the state of all times. They have to performed ritual bath at the Friday prayer which indicates the proper practice of cleanliness. Therefore, for the Islam, the cleanliness and its practice is prime condition for the spiritual life which indicates the sound physical body and mental peace.

Cleanliness and Gandhian Ideology :

M.K. Gandhi (1869-1948), the father of Indian nation was a freedom fighter and a man of strong moral practioner, who had given most important on the cleanliness and its practice. As it has been seen that the present 'Swachh Bharat Campaign' is nothing but Gandhi's idea of cleanliness. It is not only the slogan but also it indicated the responsibility of the people. As it is known by all of us that India got freedom under the leadership of Gandhiji. His dream was clean India which is yet to be fulfilled. For him, cleanliness is more important than that of independence. In this regard he said, "Sanitation is more important than independence." Gandhi proposed that the sanitation and cleanliness should be inseparable part of the human life. Therefore, he wished the total sanitation and hygiene food for all, as they are the basic ground for the sound body, mind and the fresh environment. Hence, for Gandhi, it is necessary for each and every people to acquire the knowledge about the cleanliness, proper sanitation and hygiene food preparation. Because, to devoid of this type of proper knowledge one can not live a healthy life, as the most of the diseases are caused by the poor hygienic situations. Therefore, Gandhi had given most emphasis upon to inculcate some habits from the young age of a child like – the regular bathing, the teeth brushing, cleaning hands before taking meals, cleaning surrounding of home, proper use of lavatories, cloths washing, proper conscious about the cleanliness of the public places, not spitting here and there, not mucus from the nose etc. In this context, Gandhi said, "I will not let anyone walk through my mind with their dirty feet." (Navajivan, dated 2 Novembar, 1919).

Gandhi practised cleanliness and some good habits. He also preached the important of the cleanliness and its relationship to the ideal health. He strongly emphasised specially on the cleanliness of the washrooms. In this context he again wrote, "I shall have to defend myself on one point, namely sanitary conveniences. I learnt 35 years ago that a lavatory must be as clean as a drawing room. I learnt this in the west. I believe that many rules about cleanliness in lavatories are observed more scrupulously in the West than in the East. The cause of many of our diseases is the condition of our lavatories and our bad habit of disposing of excreta any where and every where. I, therefore, believe in the absolute necessity of a clean place for answering the call of nature and clean articles for use at the time. I have accustomed myself to them and wish that all other should do the same. The habit has become so firm in me that even if I wished to change it, I would not be able to do so. Nor do I wish to change it." (Navajivan, On 24 May, 1925.)

Cleanliness and The Yoga Philosophy :

The Yoga philosophy has been founded by the great sage Patanjali through his noble works 'Yogasutra' which is the prime authentic literature of this system. In addition to this, the 'Yoga Basya' of Vayasa, the 'Tattvabaisaradi' of Basapati Misra, the 'Yogabartika' and the 'Yogasamsgraha' of Vijnanbhikshu, the 'Yogamaniprabha' and the 'Vritti' of Vojaraja are the principal authentic literary works of the Yoga philosophy.

Actually, the term 'Yoga' has been indicated different meaning by the different sources. The etymological meaning of the term 'Yoga' is derived from the root word 'Yuj' - the meaning of which is 'to connect' or 'Union'. Therefore, the term 'Yoga' might be indicated the variety of meanings like – (a) It means the union of the individual self with the Supreme self; (b) It might be the concentration of mind in to the onepointness; (c) It means the restriction of the modification of the mind or the Citta. Patanjali has been used the term 'Yoga' from the last point of view. Because, in the beginning of the 'Yogasutra' it has been said 'Cittanibriyogahi' - which indicates the 'yoga' means the restriction of the modification of the mind. Because, through the self-restriction the modification of mind can be controled and the ignorance of the self might be removed. Through these restrictions the purusa (self) might be realised itself and its difference from the Prakriti. Both the Samkhya and the Yoga philosophy, it has been mentioned that 'Kaivalya' or liberation means the real knowledge of the difference between the Purusa (self) and the Prakriti (matter). Therefore, it might be said that the term 'Yoga' is not just indicated the 'union' with the individual self and the supreme self, but the knowledge of difference between the self and the matter in the real sense of the term.

Like Samkhya and other Indian philosophical school, the Yoga system of thought has been propounded the self knowledge is the only way to attain liberation, which is the discriminative knowledge of the self and the non-self. To devoid of discriminative knowledge is the cause of the mandone bondage and the miseries of the free self. With the union of the prakriti self realised with the ego and feels himself as an agent, the knower, the enjoyer. The ignorance is the only cause which leads the self (purusa) in to the bondage. Hence, for the Yoga, the modification of mind is the main cause of the ignorance. In this situation, the Yoga has been given at first more importance upon the analysis of the mind and then after tried to given importance upon the restriction of the modification of mind. The modification of the mind can be restricted only through the practice of morality

or the practice of moral code of conduct and the application of right reason. Because, through the practice of morality or moral code of conduct one can purify the mind and then the physical body, one can restricted his modification of mind through the right mindfulness. The sound physical body, which would be enabled him to the proper analysis of the mind and its modification.

To explore this point of view in the practical life of human being, it has been founded that Patanjali has been propounded the four segments or Padas of the 'Yogasutra'. In the first pada, Patanjali explains the nature and aims of the Yoga, in the second pada he explains Yoga activities known as Sadhanapada or yogangana. Thirdly, Patanjali has been discussed how can a yogi achieve in to the spiritual realisation, try to attain in to the Godliness qualities which is known as bibhutpada. Finally, he explains the nature of Kaivalya and its impacts upon human being, which is the prime aim of the Yoga known as kaivalyapada.

We have been here tried to discuss the main point of the Yoga related to the subject matter of the term 'Swachata' or 'Souch' (Cleanliness) in the light of the Yoga philosophy. In the Yoga philosophy we have found in the second pada of the 'Yogasutra' known as sadhanapada, Patanjali has been propounded that how can one (yogi) suppressed completely his all mental modes. Actually, the suppression of all mental activities do not mean the state of deep sleep. Through the Yoga or the deep concentration the superficial layers can be excluded and one (yogi) can get the inner spirit. Hence, the yogi must undergo with a severe discipline before, then he can suppress all the mental modifications.

The prohibitions of the flesh and the restless mind can be overcome and the complete restless of the mental activities and states affected by the eightfold method of the yoga which are known as yogangana. These yoganganas are as – Yama (abstention), Niyama (observances), Asana (posture), Pranayama (regulation of breath), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (attention), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (concentration). Among these yoganganas, the Yama and the Niyama are the two yoganganas basically which are indicated the practice of morality with strict discipline. This two yoganganas are the basic foundation of the yoga practices.

Patanjali has been explored the Niyama or moral observances through the samadhipada of the 'Yogasutra' which consists of cleanliness (saucha), contentment (santosha), austerity (tapas), the study of the scriptures (svayadhaya) and the surrender to God (Isvarpranidhana). According to the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali, the practices of constant daily course of conduct for the soundness of physical body and the mental freshness is known as cleanliness or saucha. Although, the Yoga concept of cleanliness is depends on strict moral practices, yet it has been found that cleanliness (swachata) has a great influence upon the modern scientific thinking. As for example, we might be mentioned here that the daily bathing, cleaning lavatories used by oneself, controlled diet, good wishes, pardonness, sympathy and cheerfulness, etc. The habits to practice of these values and qualities revealed both the physical and mental cleanliness of one's life.

According to the Yoga system, the observance of cleanliness is the self-culture and includes external and internal purification (swachitah). Hence, cleanliness for the Yoga, might be of two kinds – (i) External (bayha) : which is the cleanliness of external body by the water and other purifying objects. Basically this type of cleanliness indicates neat and clean of the physical body and the individual's surrounding environment, like – the cleanliness of clothing which he wears, the bed where he sleeps, the space where he sits etc. His physical body and the outside environment should always be kept clean and tidy because, the cleanliness makes individual becoming the feeling of happiness. On the contrary, the dirtyness environment indicates polluted mind set of an individual. Hence, for the Yoga, cleanliness indicates not only physical hygiene but the purity of the mind set also. Here we have found that the Yoga concept of cleanliness has a great educational value for the sound physical and the mental health upon which the modern medical science and the environmental science or scholars have been given great emphasis. Keeping this aim of view, they have been conducted the awareness programme periodically among the mass people on cleanliness and its impacts upon the physical health, mind and the surrounding environment. (ii) The internal cleanliness (abhyantara) : Which is the cleanliness of the mind by purging it of all impurities, like – attachment, pride, ego etc. by cultivating compassion, goodwill and cheerfulness. The human being as come in to contact with the outward world or environment through their physical sense organs therefore, impurity of everything like – watching, hearing, smelling, touching, testing or even the thinking etc. are all have been gone in to the opposite of the cleanliness. These types of thinking should be abandoned by an individual or the people of masses. Because, it might be mentioned here that at present most of the social crimes being happened in the society, only mental impurities are responsible for these types of incidents. All thoughts of the negativity of the people living in the society are the result of such mental impurities, which prohibited the welfare of the state or society and ultimately severely affected the allround development of the society. Because, there are many ways of stimulating the mind to think bad thoughts, but very few ways of keeping it healthy. Therefore, Patanjali's concept of yogangana has given the great importance upon the observance of the cleanliness (saucha). He has been propounded to keep the mind free from all negative tendencies, it should be taken the sincere awareness and hard effort. The strict observance of the cleanliness (saucha) will keep our mind spotless and helps us to develop a high level of mental thinking.

Therefore, it has been seen that, the Yoga concept of saucha or cleanliness indicates both the physical and mental purity which leads sound and ideal mental health. For the peaceful life whether it might be individual or social, the practice of cleanliness is very important. The age old Yoga concept of saucha or cleanliness is most relevant for an ideal human being and also for the modern developed or under developed states or societies. This concept is also most relevant for environmental issue which is treated now a days as the global issue.

CONCLUSION :

From the above discussions we may conclude with some recommendations regarding the concept of cleanliness as it is challenge to proper practice and maintain hygiene for an individual. As it has been known by all of us that the importance of the cleanliness, which was advocated by Patanjali through his 'Yoga sutra' is boundless. Human being should have always being conscious about the cleanliness of their physical body, their dressings and surrounding environment in which they lived. From the stand point of all aspects of human life, like – the individual life, the religious life, the social life at large the cleanliness has an important value. Because, cleanliness is an important subject matter of modern human civilisation or development. As the sound body and the mind are the pre-condition of the human happiness which depends upon the cleanliness. Because, sound physical health is the pre-condition of sound mental state. Therefore, the cleanliness is the prime condition of all moments for an individual, his spiritual, physical and mental development. Hence, we should have special consciousness about cleanliness.

In the outward condition, specially in the rainy season, people should have given much importance upon the cleanliness of the surrounding environments like – the cleanliness of home, roads, footpaths etc. Because, the improper management of the garbage consumed speedily by the rainy water to the here and there and as a result, the contaminated bacteria might be germinated. As a result, the outbreaks of the different diseases have been rapidly increased. The accumulated water in the surroundings of the home, roads and the public places have become the birth place of variety detrimental insects like – mosquitoes, scorpions etc. For this outbreak condition, the threat to human health and life is being increased rapidly.

There have been variety of principles and directives among the states for the cleanliness management among the people. Regarding the cleanliness, if everyone conscious deeply from his own point of location and ensured the cleanliness like – the cleanliness of the mind and the physical body of an individual, the cleanliness of home and its surrounding environment, then there would be entailed the cleanliness of our nation and the environment which would become clean and tidiness of a nation in large scale.

The present condition of the society where an individual always being involved constant competition and struggled with some problems like – mental anxiety, depression, tension and frustration. To reduce these problems which are being faced by human being in the day to day life the principles of yoga and their practices might be treated as very effective. Therefore, to aware people with this positive attitude is the prime objective of this study, which would be made an ideal society with the cleanliness and tidiness.

Regarding the awareness programme about the cleanliness which is propounded by the Yoga, first of all we may focus on the educational institutions. Because, a huge number of the communities are engaged with the educational institutions like – the intellectual groups, both the teachers and the students, other officials etc. These kind of activities like - to conducting seminar, workshop, quiz programme among the students on the cleanliness and its positive impacts on health and spirituality among the students would be very effective. In this regard one point is being positive for us that as at present each and every school has been conducted prayer class where the students of all the classes have been participated actively along with the teachers, before the academic classes. In this period of time the yoga practices along with the importance of the cleanliness and its impacts on the mental and physical health might be taught with very effectively. These kind of activities if we performed properly then the success of this programme like - the yoga concept of the cleanliness would be effective. Both the mental, physical development and the proper spiritual purity of the students would be possible which are the prime condition of all round development of a child, if every one aware about the cleanliness. In this regard the active co-operation of the school authorities and the proper directions of the administration, the participation of the NGO's are necessary for the success of these awareness programmes.

Apart from this, there some recommendations might be accepted for better understanding and practice of the subject as following :

1. Regarding the external cleanliness as proposed by the Yoga, first of all we might be recognised with some points that, as any one can't change a society if he does not change from internally. Hence, there should be education both in the school and family that can help for a child to grow with the environmental knowledge. In this regard, administration should be imposed some regulatory law for the adults and other citizens. Because, any society should not suffer for any one who does not conscious his suffering and brings the pollution to it.

2. At first, one should clean himself and then his home, then after he should request to his all family members to clean the area where they lived, and finally they should request their neighbours to clean themselves as well as their area for better environment. They must learn their coming generation from early childhood about how to clean themselves and their surrounding environment.
3. There is a slogan that 'Cleanliness is the Godliness'. Therefore, the lessons on the cleanliness should be part of school curriculum from the basic level. This curriculum should be continued at the various levels like – the secondary and higher levels. Another point would be very effective in this regard like – there should be awareness campaigns arranged periodically in the colleges, universities, offices and the forums of the large gatherings about the cleanliness and its positive effects. Apart from this, electronic and print media should also need to play an active role in spreading the cleanliness awareness to the general people.

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